

new Congress and a new administration if all we see is the same old destruction in the Middle East with U.S. weapons being illegally used to kill children.

I oppose Hamas' rocket attacks on Israel. The rocket attacks, even to try to end the blockade, have no moral justification, are illegal, and must stop. But how can Israel claim self-defense when it bombs Gaza, which has no army, no air force, no navy, and has been under a constant blockade? How can Israel claim self-defense when its bombs destroy U.N. schools, killing children?

The children of Palestinians and the children of Israel both deserve life. But the lives of the children of Gaza are cynically discounted as human shields. Massacres are being rationalized. Israel's "moral high ground" in Gaza, a growing pile of small bones in a graveyard.

The administration knows Israel is using U.S. weapons, paid for by U.S. taxpayers, with disproportionate force, creating a collective punishment of Gazans, assuring an escalation of conflict, clear violations of the Arms Export Control Act.

Israel was given U.S. weapons on condition they would not be used for aggression or escalation. This outgoing administration must finally stand for the rule of law, not the rule of force.

IN MEMORY OF SERGEANT JOHN PENICH, U.S. ARMY

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a brave American soldier who sacrificed his life for freedom, Sergeant John Penich.

Sergeant Penich, by all accounts, was an extraordinary soldier whose hard work and determination earned him the title of Soldier of the Year in 2007 for his brigade. His bravery was evident in combat on several occasions. Brigadier General Perry Wiggins has said he knows of three separate instances when Sergeant Penich saved the lives of his comrades.

According to newspaper reports, one of his final acts of bravery came on September 6, 2008, when his patrol was attacked by rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire. He showed his courage under fire, taking charge and reestablishing security and saving the lives of his platoon members. His heroics on that day earned him a Silver Star, the third highest honor given to members of the armed services for valor.

Five and a half weeks after he earned the Silver Star, he gave the ultimate sacrifice. Sergeant Penich put himself in harm's way to make the world a better place.

His commitment to this country is second to none. He wanted to be an officer, and there's no doubt we would have benefited from this young man's tremendous leadership abilities.

Sergeant John Penich is a true American hero. I ask that my colleagues keep his family and friends in their thoughts and prayers during this very difficult time.

CONGRESS MUST WORK TO SAVE AND CREATE JOBS DURING THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

(Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Madam Speaker, last year, nearly 2 million Americans lost their jobs. Almost half of those job losses came in October and November, after the financial collapse of Wall Street.

The December jobs numbers will be out in a couple of days, but it is not likely to be good news. All month long retailers were saying that they had to lay off seasonal help because Americans simply were not spending their money. And that's not surprising, considering that many of our constituents are justifiably concerned about their job security. Even those that are confident that they will hold on to their jobs are feeling financially squeezed because they are being paid less than they were 10 years ago.

As the 111th Congress begins this week, we are committed to getting Americans back to work and preventing further job cuts from happening later this year. We also want to provide middle class Americans with tax relief so they can better afford their monthly bills.

Madam Speaker, as change comes to Washington, we should work in a bipartisan manner to pass an economic recovery package quickly. We cannot afford to wait.

A NEW YEAR

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, this year we should work immediately to address the challenges facing our Nation. Recent job losses and a decline in the housing market have led many Americans to lose confidence in our economy. I am optimistic, however, that sound bipartisan solutions that support small businesses and provide tax relief to American families will mean a quicker recovery and less of a burden on future generations of taxpayers.

As we expand opportunities for job creation, Congress should promote an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We cannot sustain our expensive and strategically dangerous dependence on foreign oil.

While there remain enemies who threaten our freedoms, I am grateful that our fighting men and women remain committed to their duty. We must defeat terrorists overseas to pro-

tect American families at home. We must always honor our military and veterans.

I am confident that we will lead our Nation toward greater prosperity and security if we trust and invest in the ingenuity and spirit of the American people with limited government.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN INVESTS IN AMERICA'S FUTURE

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, at a time of great economic anxiety, this new Congress faces enormous challenges. In the next 6 weeks we're going to craft and hopefully pass an economic recovery package that will create and save millions of jobs and will help jump start our economy with investments in some of our Nation's top priorities.

At a time when millions of Americans are losing their health insurance, Washington needs to provide critical assistance to States so that they can continue to provide health care services through Medicaid. If Congress does not act, States will have no other choice than to begin dropping coverage. That is an immediate health care concern that we should deal with as part of any economic stimulus package.

But we also have an opportunity to modernize our health care system with new computer technology that will greatly reduce health care costs and will improve care for every American.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with all of my colleagues in crafting a bipartisan plan that will help rebuild our economy so that we can get people back to work.

SELF DEFENSE AGAINST RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Madam Speaker, the radical hate group Hamas in Gaza has refused to renew a truce with Israel. It has begun once more firing thousands of Iranian-made rockets into Israel. Numerous Israelis have died in the last 11 days.

Hamas wants to annihilate Israel because, well, they're Jews. Hamas kills people that aren't radical Muslims like themselves. That's why they're called terrorists.

Hamas cowardly hides among civilians for cover, fires rockets, then is indignant if Israel defends itself. But Israel has moved into Gaza to find these bad guys.

Some world leaders, rather than mounting pressure on Hamas to stop the rocket attacks, are calling for a ceasefire, even a unilateral withdrawal